

States make such a system more appropriate;

“(ii) ensure that contracts awarded under clause (I) are in an amount sufficient to provide for each state a minimum of one full-time specialist with expertise in the development of children under age three and programming for pregnant women and such children;

“(iii) to the maximum extent practicable, ensure that the contracts awarded Under clause (I) and the services provided therein are integrated with and augment the contract or contracts awarded and services provided under section 648 (n); and

“(iv) ensure that the entities described in clause (I) determine the types of services to be provided through consultation with—

“(I) local entities that carry out Early Head Start programs;

“(II) the State Head Start collaboration office; and

“(III) the State Head Start Association.”.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to House Resolution 348, the gentlewoman from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Hawaii.

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. Chairman, I rise today to ask for my colleagues' support for this amendment, to improve Early Head Start.

The amendment revises the training and technical assistance system by ensuring that these services are provided by entities with specific expertise in infant and toddler development. It also directs at least 50 percent of training and technical assistance funds directly to the grantees. These are the people on the ground working with children who are best able to prioritize their training needs for the purpose of program improvement.

In our hearing on the bill in the Committee on Education and Labor, we heard that Head Start providers are not getting the assistance they need under the current system. One program director said that it had been 10 months since she saw her technical assistance specialist.

The current system centralized control often results in the assistance specialist spending more time filling out forms for their supervisors than directly helping the program directors in the field. The bill we are debating today solves this problem for the Head Start program serving preschoolers by directing the responsibility for training and technical assistance responsibility into the State-based system that can better meet the needs of the local providers.

Early Head Start directors experience similar problems, and, therefore, should get a similar solution. This amendment provides that solution and, furthermore, requires that these State-based technical assistance providers include individuals with infant and toddler expertise available to work with Early Head Start providers.

Rigorous evaluations show that the Early Head Start program has made a positive difference in the lives of participating children and their families.

This bill expands the Early Head Start program, which currently serves only 3 percent of eligible infants and toddlers. And as Early Head Start expands, we must ensure that individual programs have the knowledge and skills to provide positive outcomes for participants. This amendment will do that, and I urge all of my colleagues to support it.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Chairman, will the gentlewoman yield?

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. Chairman, I yield to the gentleman from California.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. I thank her very much for introducing this amendment, and we rise in support of this amendment. We think it improves the legislation, and thank her for her consideration.

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. McKEON. Mr. Chairman, I rise to claim the time in opposition to the amendment, even though I support the gentlewoman's amendment.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. Without objection, the gentleman from California is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Mr. McKEON. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of the gentlewoman's amendment, which revises the training and technical assistance program for Early Head Start by ensuring that training and technical assistance are provided by entities with specific expertise in infant and toddler development. I believe that that makes a stronger bill, and I thank her for her amendment.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO).

The question was taken; and the Acting Chairman announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. Mr. Chairman, I demand a recorded vote.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Hawaii will be postponed.

AMENDMENT NO. 5 OFFERED BY MR. MICA

The Acting CHAIRMAN. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 5 printed in House Report 110-116.

Mr. MICA. Mr. Chairman, I offer an amendment.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Amendment No. 5 offered by Mr. MICA:

Page 154, line 9, strike “2013” and insert “2011”.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to House Resolution 348, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MICA) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida.

Mr. MICA. Mr. Chairman, first of all, I want to take a minute to compliment Mr. MILLER and also Mr. McKEON. This is one of the most important bills that this Congress will take up in this session because it deals with, as Mr. MILLER said, as I listened to his opening statement, with our disadvantaged youth. And, unfortunately, we have many in this country. But it gives those youth the opportunity for the future and the opportunity that we have all shared that are here on this floor and many of us listening Members.

I think the bill is a step in the right direction in requiring that at least 50 percent of all Head Start teachers nationwide have a bachelor's or advanced degree in childhood education or related field by September 30, 2013. My amendment is a simple amendment. It would move up that date 2 years, to 2011.

I am not a newcomer to this debate. I could go back to 1993, when I came here, and give statements from the floor and back over the years. My degree is in education. I am usually here on transportation and enjoy my service on that committee. But as someone educated as an educator, nothing is more important than the quality of education and those professionals that we have.

The Mica amendment moves up the date to have professionals in place to 2011. We can do that. We have done it before. We have actually required qualifications, and now we have more than a majority having an associate degree. So we have done this in the past. Currently, 38 percent of all of our Head Start teachers already meet this goal, so we are only talking about 12 percent in 4 years as opposed to 6 years.

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Does it really take 6 years to get an additional 12 percent of the teachers to be in our most important educational program with these qualifications?

Now, we've moved this program from what I called it 14 years ago, from a glorified babysitting program, to a program that is giving our students the opportunity for quality educational opportunity. And these young people, at this age, deserve the very best. They are coming from the very worst, the worst as far as disadvantage in our society, the worst as far as opportunity, as far as family setting, as far as their readiness for school.

Mr. MILLER talked about making them ready for school. Well, do you want them ready with someone who is unqualified or someone with the best qualifications?

Better prepared, Mr. MILLER talked about. We need the most skilled professionals to give them the preparation. And these are our toughest students, the very toughest students. Do you want someone with or without qualifications?